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October 30, 1960

Dear Dick:

This is a sort of last minute report before taking off, next week to be sure, for Tulsa. So far 23 people have sent in their opinions via our poll and the results at the moment, on a 5-4-3-2-1 basis come out: Grantham-56 Chambers 49 Daniels 35 Cotner 28 Elkins 28 Haffan 26 Moore 25 Johnson 17 and Williams 14. Perhaps better than the votes have been about ten illuminating comments on various books. I'll take all of this material with me to Tulsa and I'm sure that Joe and I will take everything we can into consideration before settling on a book for the prize. As you well know, we don't even have to take into consideration any of these books. Well, maybe we have to take them all into consideration, but we can select any damn one we wish. At the moment, I'm sure that I have no favorite.

In view of the above, though, if you have further comment on the books by Chambers, Daniels, and Grantham, and, for that matter, any of the others, I'd certainly like to get it.

I'm sending a copy of this to Joe and am asking him, in this fashion, to be sure to take a considerable look at the three leading books, in case he hasn't done so already. Obviously, the Elkins book is the most controversial of the lot. People either go for it as the best or the worst. That is an exaggeration but not too much so. My guess is that the Williams book has been read very little and isn't being given the chance it would otherwise have. Actually, I have only glanced at it. The Cotner book has been given high praise and full condemnation. I'm not thinking of this one, but it is rather apparent to me that some of our people polled have looked upon this as a popularity contest. Maybe I'm wrong on this, but the comments seem to indicate such.

Well, you can be assured that we'll do our best, and also that we'll be cussed for the result, regardless of what it may be.

Sincerely,

Jim Silver